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FIRST AIDER'S 52-YEAR SHIFT

Michael Race
mrace@nqo.com

A VOLUNTEER, who has now been tending to strains, sprains and pains in Oxfordshire for more than 50 years, says she has no plans to stop.

Hazel Punter, of Banbury, has volunteered for the St John Ambulance Service for 52 years.

This month she was presented with a Laurel Leaf, to honour her lifetime of service to the first aid charity.

The 68-year-old started volunteering for the St John cadets as a child, when she lived in Surrey, because her father was involved in volunteering.

Mrs Punter said: "I started volunteering for St John when I was 10, but I actually volunteered for Red Cross when I was seven.

"It's always something I have done. I went on to become a professional nurse, got married and moved to Oxfordshire, where I have been ever since.

"I feel quite proud. I have been there all my life, which is an achievement.

"I'm still volunteering – I was on duty the other day – and I'm going to continue."

Professionally, Mrs Punter trained to become a nurse in Canterbury, Kent, before meeting her husband, John.

The couple then moved to a marital home near Bicester in 1969.

She was in the St John Ambulance Service for Bicester for two-and-a-half years, before she joined the Banbury unit, where has since served for 43 years.

During that time, she also worked as a district nurse, caring for patients in most of North Oxfordshire.

The gilt Laurel Leaf is given to volunteers in service after 52 years.

It is worn with the service medal of the Order of St John, which is the only British medal that bears the head of Queen Victoria on current issue.

Mrs Punter added: "I have always been interested in it. It's a Christian service to the community and I like helping people. It gives something back to the community.

"My husband has been very supportive over the years. When I was out, he had to look after the children.

"The time has gone so quickly."

The grandmother, who also used to provide first aid at Gatwick Airport during the time she lived in Surrey, said



Hazel Punter with her St John Ambulance Laurel Leaf award, marking 52 years' work

she found being a volunteer very useful and met lots of different people that she would not have ordinarily have done.

The unit manager for Banbury's St John Ambulance Service, Mike Hickman, has volunteered there for 20 years.

He said: "Hazel is one of those people where I can pick up the phone at the last minute and she will go out for me.

"If we're really stuck, she will put her hand up. She is a godsend.

"I'm so proud of her. She is such an example to others."



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Ringroad plans

OXON: A project to bring £50m worth of improvements to the A34 around Oxford has started.

Highways England has confirmed officers are now investigating how to improve the Peartree and Botley interchanges on the ring road.

The funding was announced in December, but groundwork is not due to start for several years.

Highways England spokesman Stuart Miller said: "Only after consulting widely with local stakeholders and examining the technological, economic and environmental benefits and impacts of the work will we be able to develop a detailed plan and timetable for work. We will keep the public informed."

Home price up

OXON: House prices across the county rose slightly last month, suggesting the market may be cooling.

Land Registry figures showed the average price for a property reached £284,492 in June, compared with £284,155 in May.

Year-on-year property prices were up eight per cent from £263,415 in June last year. Over the past three years, they rose 19 per cent, from £238,458 in 2012.

The average price of a detached house is now £453,686, compared with £420,074 last June. A terraced house costs £245,549 on average and a flat £195,884.

Party on stilts

BANBURY: A treasure hunt and circus performers will be among attractions at the Banbury Old Town Summer Party on September 5.

Activities scheduled for the annual event – being run from 10am to 3pm – will also include street organs, dance, music and stilt walkers.

Two die after car leaves road in M40 crash

The aftermath of the crash that caused tailbacks along the M40 between Banbury and Bicester
Picture: Adrian Everton



TWO people died in a car crash on the M40 on Monday night, police have announced.

One lane of the motorway southbound was still closed the following morning between junctions 9 and 10

in north Oxfordshire, as police investigated what happened.

Thames Valley Police spokeswoman Hannah Jones said: "At 8.45pm, a black Vauxhall Astra was travelling southbound

between junctions 10 and 9 when the driver lost control and the vehicle left the road, coming to a stop on the nearside embankment.

"Two occupants, the driver and passenger of the vehicle, died at the scene."

Neither person has been formally identified and their families have not yet been informed, she said.

The force appealed for anyone who might have more information to call 101. Drivers reported queues

up to 13 miles long leading up to the collision scene.

Earlier this year, the Government announced the number of accidents on the M40 had prompted it to review of the motorway's safety.

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Blueprint for homes and business is here

After 10 years of drafts local plan for Cherwell district is made official

Naomi Herring
nherring@nqo.com

AFTER 10 years of planning, a document that will guide the delivery of 22,840 homes across Cherwell has been agreed.

Cherwell District Council adopted the plan after getting the official opinion of a Government inspector.

The document will act as a major blueprint of sites for development and employment up to 2031.

Cherwell District Council lead member for planning Michael Gibbard said: "It

has taken 10 years of preparation, 18 months of scrutiny and thousands of officer hours, but we are delighted to now be in a position where we have an up-to-date Local Plan.

"This document will guide all planning applications over the next 16 years and, coupled with the fact we have a five-year land supply, will effectively put an end to speculative applications which contravene our preferred sites for development."

"The plan signifies an important step in Cherwell's future as it will give us full control over the expansion of the district without being open to interpretation by opportunistic developers."

The Local Plan will be immediately implemented as a guide for where 10,129 homes should go in Bicester, including 3,293 at the eco town,

2,100 self-builds at Graven Hill, 1,500 in South East Bicester, 726 in South West Bicester and 300 at Gavray Drive.

A further 7,319 homes are set for Banbury, including 1,345 in Salt Way East, 700 in Canalside, 600 in Southam Road and 544 in North Hanks Well Fields. It also earmarks 2,361 homes at the former RAF site in Upper Heyford and 3,031 elsewhere in the district.

It also outlines 138.5 hectares of employment land in Bicester and 61 hectares in Banbury.

Examination of the document was suspended last year following the publication of Oxfordshire's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which noted a need for an additional 6,050 more homes in Cherwell.

Government inspector

Nigel Payne examined the document and held a three-week hearing to consider the views of residents and organisations.

After consideration, no changes were made to the location and quantity of housing, but employment land in Banbury was cut by 36 hectares.

He concluded less employment space at a site bordering south Northamptonshire would limit the impact on surrounding countryside.

The inspector also removed proposals for "green buffers" of land to separate the rural and urban areas, deeming it unnecessary.

But Langford resident John Broad, speaking to the meeting on behalf of some Bicester residents, lobbied for a site close to Gavray Drive to be given Local Green Space designation.

Guitar prodigy's in the limelight



Guitar prodigy 10-year-old Toby Lee, of Bloxham, uploads videos on to YouTube, where they have already reached half a million views

The youngster's YouTube video has received more than five million views

David Rivers
drivers@nqo.com

A YOUNG guitar prodigy has been thrown into the limelight after his video gathered 5.5 million views on Facebook and a retweet from celebrity heavyweight Perez Hilton.

Toby Lee, 10, first began strumming a ukulele when he was four before dad Terry Lee bought him an electric guitar at the age of six.

Four years later, Toby, from Bloxham, decided to post a blues track in April, called *Get Well Soon Mr BB King*, on YouTube after the blues legend, who died in May, was hospitalised.

The track caught the eye of American blues musician Joe Bonamassa earlier this year, who posted it on Facebook along with the words "this is what it is all about."

And last Tuesday his fanbase reached heights on when blogger Perez Hilton shared the video with his following of more than six million on Twitter.

Toby Lee said: "My dad told me but I didn't know who he was. Then we looked him up on Wikipedia and it felt really cool because it felt like I had turned into a bigger person."

"I got into the blues about a year ago when I saw Buddy Guy. 'On the web it showed BB King and I loved it, *The Thrill is Gone*."

"We got a backing track and I just played to it, then my parents were looking and they were like what is that, they had never seen me play like that."

"I feel pleased because I always try to work hard, and it is not about money it is about doing what you want to do."

"My idols are Angus Young, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Jimi Hendrix."

Proud dad Mr Lee said: "It is just amazing someone like Perez Hilton has picked up on a local lad from Bloxham."

Businesswoman up for hire to raise funds

A BUSINESSWOMAN is putting herself up for "hire" for a month in aid of the British Heart Foundation.

Judy Mansfield, 57, is a qualified celebrant and runs Cherish Ceremonies, which offers bespoke weddings, christenings and funerals

in Oxfordshire.

Throughout August she will take on any job that come her way. Firms, organisations and individuals can give Mrs Mansfield work in exchange for a minimum donation of £10.

Requests have been made for babysitting,

dog-sitting, washing up, making teas, filing and French conversation.

Mrs Mansfield said: "I'm up for anything as long as it isn't illegal, immoral or obscene."

To contact Mrs Mansfield, call 07713 278699 or e-mail judy@cherish-ceremonies.co.uk

Calls to keep children off construction sites

A HOUSEBUILDER is urging youngsters to stay away from its building sites during the summer holidays.

David Wilson Homes Mercia - building homes at its development in Adderbury Fields - is

asking children to keep off its developments.

Director Harry Marcuse-Harris said: "Building sites are full of dangers. Youngsters are often on the lookout for somewhere new and exciting to play, but

construction sites are not adventure playgrounds.

"Our construction teams watch out for youngsters during the day and we secure our sites at night, we ask parents to know where their children are."

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Volunteers needed for dormouse search

VOLUNTEERS are needed to help hunt for the dormouse.

The Oxfordshire Dormouse Project has said it needs up to 60 people to help carry out what it says is "vital" monitoring and recording work over the summer.

One thousand nesting tubes have been installed in 14 woodland areas around Charlbury, Fulbrook, Piddington, Stokenchurch and Goring, and researchers are hoping these will provide evidence of dormice activity and show whether the species is in decline in the area.

Pete Newbold, survey officer for the project that is run by Oxfordshire Mammal Group, said: "Dormice are quite rare, they're a protected species and

there are very few records of them in Oxfordshire.

"We need around five volunteers per site, and this is a unique opportunity to join a licensed group of experts and take part in important work."

"If we do find dormice, then some of our volunteers may be able to handle them."

The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment has provided £4,000 for the work.

Mr Newbold added: "Even if people are unable to volunteer, we'd still like them to conduct nut hunts of their own."

To volunteer, people must become a member of Oxfordshire Mammal Group for £5. See oxonmammals.org.



Pete Newbold with a dormouse

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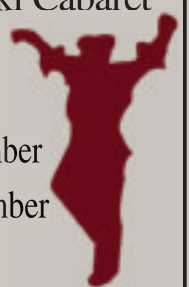
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Police probe why its van parked in pick-up space

Shopper reports incident in superstore car park, calling it 'blatant abuse' of position

Luke Sproule
lsproule@nqo.com

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched after a police vehicle was parked in a set-down and pick-up bay at a Morrison's supermarket.

Banbury resident Scott Adams reported the incident to Thames Valley Police after he saw the van parked in the space in the supermarket in Swan Close Road in the town.

The force has now said it will investigate the incident, which happened on Saturday, July 18.

Quality manager Mr Adams, 45, said: "This is not the first time I have seen it happen at Morrisons."

"Sometimes they are parked in the parent and child spaces and sometimes it is in the collection and pick-up space."

"It happens often and people just sort of look and sigh."

"I saw the officer walking around shopping. I accept that if he was responding to a call out he might have had to park somewhere like that, but this was just a



The police van parked in a bay designed for very short-term use, such as pick-ups and drop-offs of shoppers

blatant abuse." In April 2013, a police officer apologised after a similar incident where a police car was parked in a parent and child space in Tesco,

Abingdon.

Police spokesman James Williams said: "We received Mr Adams's complaint and acknowledged it. The matter will now be

investigated and we will respond to Mr Adams."

"It would be inappropriate to comment any further while the matter is being investigated."

Abseiling duo to boost charities

TWO esteemed figures have been roped into a daring abseil off a hospital block for a number of its charities.

Former Keble College warden Sir Christopher Ball and Lady Pippa Baldry have signed up for the event in September.

Fundraisers can take part in the 100ft abseil down the Women's Centre at the John Radcliffe Hospital, for the Children's Hospital, cancer and haematology day treatment unit and outpatients fund, head and neck cancer research group Heads Up, or the Silver Star Society, for women with high-risk pregnancies. The abseil costs £20 and over-18s can take part.

For details, see hospitalcharity.co.uk/abseils or call 01865 743444.



Sir Christopher and Lady Pippa prepare

Migrants are arrested

FIFTEEN people were arrested on suspicion of immigration offences after being found in a lorry's trailer.

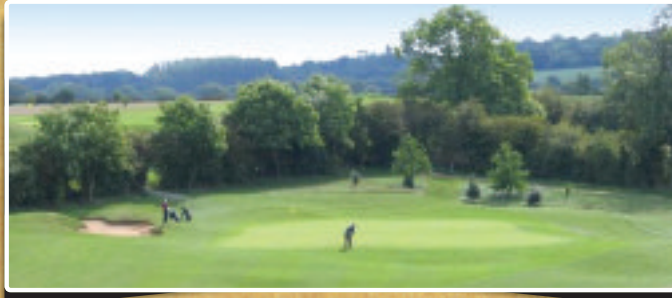
Thames Valley Police stopped a large goods vehicle on the M40 near Banbury last Friday.

Spokeswoman Charlotte Redman said: "We got a call from one of two Romanian lorry drivers, that they could hear banging. Officers safely guided the lorry off the motorway and arrested 15 men and women on suspicion of immigration offences."



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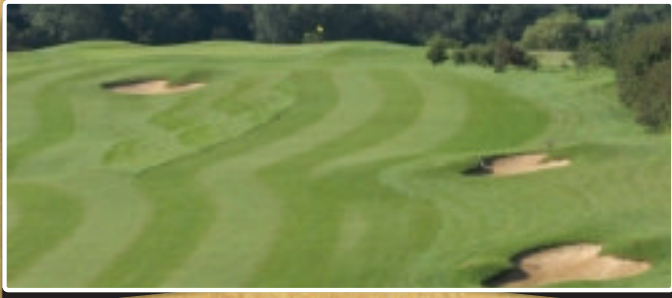
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Crews hit out over speeding



Penalty notices added up to more than £330,000 before appeals

SCAS was issued with 3,306 speeding tickets in the last 12 months

Luke Sproule
lsproule@nqo.com

MORE than 3,000 speeding tickets were issued to Oxfordshire's ambulance service in just one year.

Only two other ambulance services in England — in Yorkshire and East Midlands — were given more tickets than the 3,306 given to South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS), which covers Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hampshire.

The penalty charge notices (PCNs) added up to £330,600 in 2013 for the service, but is believed many of them were successfully appealed because speed limits do not apply to emergency vehicles responding to calls.

Former volunteer SCAS ambulance driver Godfrey Smith, 66, said the tickets should not be issued.

The Faringdon resident worked as a community first responder for the service for 15 years until 2013 before being sacked for speeding on his way to a call-out, as the exemption does not cover volunteers in their own vehicles.

He was reinstated after a campaign by our sister paper, the *Oxford Mail*, but retired in December 2014.

He said: "We need to look at

the way these tickets are sent out to stop this happening.

"I think if an ambulance goes through a speed trap but it clearly has its blue lights on a ticket should not automatically be issued.

"It is an added pressure for paramedics and this has been going on for years but nobody has ever done anything.

"The time spent appealing against these tickets would be better spent saving lives."

On top of the 3,306 speeding tickets issued to the ambulance trust, another 58 were issued to SCAS paramedics between 2013 and 2015.

The highest speed recorded by a SCAS emergency vehicle was 96mph in a 60mph zone.

In order for an ambulance service to appeal a speeding ticket, it must check the vehicle's registration against records to get a radio call sign and check this against the 999 incident log. If the log matches the time a vehicle got a ticket, the service must write an official letter to police.

SCAS spokeswoman Michelle Archer said: "SCAS has worked closely with the police forces in our area to develop an approved and robust system to handle all notices of intended prosecutions.

"This is in line with Association of Chief Police Officers guidance which means we should not receive notifications for activations where blue lights are visible.

"We are really pleased to have implemented this robust system."

ATTEND A NEW SUPPORT GROUP FOR CANCER PATIENTS

PATIENTS, carers and families affected by a blood cancer can join a new support group in Banbury.

The New Oxfordshire Lymphoma Association has its first meeting at the Postgraduate Centre at Horton Hospital from 3pm on

Sunday, August 16.

Lymphatic cancer appears as a tumour, most commonly in lymph nodes of the neck, chest, armpit or groin.

To find out more, call the Lymphoma Association's free helpline on 0800 808 5555 or visit lymphomas.org.uk.

Sex case failure probe suspended

AN INVESTIGATION by the police watchdog into Thames Valley Police's handling of Operation Bullfinch has been suspended, it has emerged.

The force referred itself to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) on February 26, in the wake of a serious case review of how authorities failed to prevent the sexual abuse of young girls in

Oxford by grooming gangs.

The review said there were 1,561 recorded police contacts with the girls, but just 26 offences recorded.

In one instance, a victim said she arrived at a police station during the early hours of the morning, "bruised and bloody", but was dismissed as "being naughty, a nuisance".

The IPCC's investigation is due to look at whether

any police officers or staff should be disciplined, but the watchdog said it had suspended the investigation in April.

Spokeswoman Annabelle McMillan said: "We have asked the force for some clarification on issues highlighted within the serious case review and its own individual management review, and we are awaiting its response."

VAN DRIVER ATTACKED

A MAN was pulled from his van by two men and assaulted with a knife, police said.

Thames Valley Police were called to Withycombe Drive, Banbury, at 11.45pm on July 21, following reports that a 23-year-old had been attacked.

Officers said he suffered minor injuries, believed to be from a knife, but did not need hospital treatment. One suspect fled on foot and the other left in a blue vehicle. Det Insp Mike Roddy said it had seemed a "targeted attack".

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Website aims to link charities with possible backers

A COMMUNITY group is hoping a new website will make it easier for charities and organisations to find new funding.

Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action has come up with the idea of collecting details of thousands of groups and advertising their needs to funders.

It comes after OCVA director Trevor Barton said some not-for-profit groups struggled to find new ways of bringing in cash.

The site would work like Amazon, with customers not just searching for a charity, but for the type of service it offered or by its location.

Mr Barton said each charity's page would have details of what it did, what it needed and how the funding could help. Potential backers could decide whether to invest.

Mr Barton, who said charity 360 Giving had told OCVA the tool was the first of its kind in the UK, added: "Oxfordshire Community Foundation director Jayne Woodley pointed out that there are a lot of funders in Oxfordshire but they are not finding each other.

"There are more than 1,000 groups that will automatically be included because they were in our public directory."

OCVA hopes the tool will be ready to use next summer. Banbury Food for Charities, which transports unwanted food from supermarkets to charities, has already submitted its details.

Trustee Kieron Mallon said: "I think charities are usually best placed to provide and deliver a lot of services that people need and to have a one-stop shop to find charities in our area is a very good idea and it will save a lot of people time."

Charities and groups can submit their details at ocva.org.uk.

Aim to get more county teenagers rising to challenge of being model citizens

THOUSANDS of Oxfordshire teenagers are due to benefit from a scheme to help them make a difference in their community.

Oxfordshire County Council hopes to deliver the National Citizen Service until 2018.

The scheme, funded by the Government, allows teenagers aged 15 to 17 to get involved with projects, learn skills and gain confidence.

They are taken to the Isle of Wight for a week of rock climbing, abseiling and other activities. They visit Hill End, near Farmoor, to try cooking and first aid and listen to sexual health advice. Lastly, they are challenged to raise money for a charity.

One NCS team leader, James Moores, said: "It's really great to watch their confidence grow. This goes on their CVs and boosts their opportunities later in life."

Participant Jodie Meeson, 15, of Cheney School, said: "I was really anxious about finding work or going to sixth form, but throughout these past four weeks I've felt so confident and I'm not worried about leaving school now."

It is expected that more than 600 Oxfordshire teenagers will have completed the scheme by the end of this year.



Tilly Burns, left, and Jodie Meeson, two of the teenagers who have taken part

Crime spree teen jailed

Judge tells man to sort out his problems and behave

Joe Gammie
jgammie@nqo.com

A TEENAGE father, who was behind a string of crimes, has been handed a six-month jail sentence and told to sort out his problems.

Daniel Lewis had admitted carrying out the catalogue of crimes when he appeared for an hearing at Banbury Magistrates' Court earlier this year.

They included shoplifting, as-

sault, burglary and public disorder, all committed during six-week period.

Cathy Olliver, prosecuting, said the 19-year-old had shoplifted from the Cooperative, Aldi and Mace stores in Banbury between April and May this year.

He had also admitted hurling abuse at a staff member in a branch of the McDonald's fast food restaurant and punching Shaw Dickinson repeatedly in the face.

The attack was said to have happened after their girlfriends got into a fight.

Kathryn Havington, defending, said Lewis, of School View, Ban-

bury, had started getting into trouble after he became involved with a young woman.

She added: "Most of his offending has been intrinsically linked to his relationship [with the woman mentioned].

"She is a 24-year-old female who has quite a troubled past."

Miss Havington appealed to the court for a suspended sentence to be imposed, so that Lewis could continue to support his six-month-old daughter.

However, at Oxford Crown Court on Tuesday, Judge Ian Pringle said he could not ignore the commission of so many crimes so close together.

He decided to impose a custodial sentence on Lewis for a period of six months, as well as handing him a £200 fine.

The judge told him: "At the age of 19, I have to sentence you for a large number of offences.

"Not offences of the most serious sort on their own, but taken together [they comprise] a real orgy of offending.

"You are an adult and you have got to understand it is down to you to sort your own problems out.

"I hope that you have properly reflected upon your life.

"You are at the beginning of adulthood. Make sure that you don't waste it."

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS: This voucher is valid from Wednesday, August 5, 2015 until Tuesday, August 11, 2015 at The Food Warehouse Banbury Cross. Amended, defaced or photocopied vouchers will not be accepted. Cash value 0.0001p. Coupon not for resale. Only one coupon can be used per transaction. Offer valid in store only. ©2014 Iceland Foods Limited, registered office, Second Avenue, Deeside Industrial Park, Deeside, Flintshire, CH5 2NW.



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Plenty of room with hotel

Newly refurbished chain offers guests luxury and spacious accommodation

David Rivers
drivers@nqo.com

A REVAMPED 120-bedroom hotel has opened to guests in Banbury after a remodelling to give it a greater capacity.

The Premier Inn took over its building from the Holiday Inn on the Stroud Park estate in Ermott Way.

The refurbishment and redesign has added eight new rooms to the hotel and there are now a total of 160 parking spaces.

The ground floor and the first floor opened on July 3, but the second floor will not be unveiled until August, and the third floor will be ready by September.

The operations manager for Premier Inn, Claire Tomlin, said a lack of hotels in Banbury had driven the company to open in the town.

She added: "Premier Inn has a hotel every one or two miles down the road and the nearest one to here was Bicester."

"It has been really good so far, because Banbury is a great place."

According to Premier Inn, eight former meeting rooms have been turned into hotel rooms as part of the revamp.

The hotel site is close to the M40, just off Junction 11, with a range of catering outlets nearby.



Operations manager Claire Tomlin says Banbury is a great place, but had been under-represented in hotel room terms



The revamp includes a restaurant, open to non-residents



Rooms have all been refurbished, in a change to Premier Inn

Man arrested

BANBURY: A man arrested following an indecent exposure in Spiceball Park has been released without charge.

Police said a 17-year-old boy was walking through the park when he saw a man exposing himself at about 2.15pm on Wednesday, June 17.

A 56-year-old man was arrested on the same day on suspicion of indecent exposure. He was bailed until last week and has now been released.

Road collision

N OXON: A crash between a single-decker bus and a Vauxhall Astra car closed two lanes on the M40 near Banbury.

Thames Valley Police said they were called to the crash at about 2pm on July 23. The woman driving the car was taken to the John Radcliffe Hospital, but was not believed to have life-threatening injuries.

Two lanes were closed southbound, between Junctions 10 and 11.

War tributes

OXON: The Royal British Legion has invited Second World War veterans from Oxfordshire to join a national commemoration event marking the 70th anniversary of Victory over Japan Day on August 15.

Veterans of the Far East campaign, former Prisoners of War and their families are invited to the event at Horse Guards Parade from 2pm.

Call on 02030 537015.



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01295 722868

Church collects 100,000 stamps for charity

A CHURCH has collected more than 100,000 stamps for charity following a two-year campaign.

Volunteers from Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in Bankside, Banbury, have been collecting the items in an attempt to raise funds for Oxfam and Leukaemia Care.

The idea is that Oxfam will carefully value each set of stamps and price them in their stores, with all funds going to the charity.

Project co-ordinator at the church Des Waddington originally began the scheme in Daventry five years ago, where more than half a million stamps were donated to the cause, before he started a new one in Banbury two years ago.

By March this year, the group had collected 58,000 stamps, which was enough to buy 20 goats, six cows or provide 500 people with safe drinking water.

Now, in a stunning surge, more than 100,000 stamps have been collected and excited volunteers have begun handing them over.

Mr Waddington, based in Crick near Rugby, said the achievement ranked among his favourite memories during his 32-year involvement with the church.

He added: "We have one business that sends them in quite regularly called DLC in Brackley and then members of the church bring in a few here and there.

"There is no reason as to why it can't go improving from here and



Volunteer Kennedy Liddell, 11, from Bicester, with some of the thousands of stamps that have been donated

we are going to carry on.

"I think it shows the generosity of the people of Banbury and the public support and it shows there are a lot of people who are prepared to make sacrifice.

"There have been so many highlights and this is one of them

because I have seen so many people that have been so generous. "People have given their stamp collections, which is quite moving."

Banbury Oxfam Bookshop spokeswoman Lis Griffin said stamps were flying off the shelves at an increasing rate and was

delighted at the contribution, adding: "Almost all of the stamps will be sold in the Banbury shop, where a growing number of collectors visit us week by week."

Church leader Bishop Joseph Gedge said he was thrilled such a fun way of engaging people.

Store creates jobs

BANBURY: A new food store, creating 30 jobs, has opened this week on the Banbury Cross Retail Park.

Iceland unveiled its 7,714 sq ft megastore Food Warehouse, one of only seven in the UK, which is more than double the size of a normal Iceland shop.

It is one of two new shops opening at the retail park. In March, it was announced that Waitrose would also open a shop, but a date has not yet been given.

Golf for charity

OXON: Staff and users of a brain injury charity are being given the opportunity to play golf free as part of Whole in One Golf's Business Partnership Project.

Headway Oxfordshire, which works with those living with brain-related injuries in Kennington, has been chosen as the only charitable organisation to gain access to Frilford Heath Golf Club.

The partnership will provide visitors from Headway with a complimentary 4-ball at any event in addition to free branding and advertising on site.

Victoria Cliff Hodges, from Headway Oxfordshire, said: "Staff and service-users at the charity will very much enjoy linking up with Frilford Heath Golf Club and its business partners for the next 24 months, both on and off the glorious courses and grounds that the club sits on."

Kitchen blaze

BANBURY: A family escaped harm when smoke alarms alerted them to a kitchen fire.

Firefighters were sent out at 4.30am on Saturday, July 18, and put out the blaze in Padbury Drive. One resident was treated for the effects of smoke inhalation.

Incident commander Simon Piper said: "This is a good example of the importance of working smoke alarms."

Fears over cost of bed blocking

It has been revealed the 'number one challenge' for area is costing £9m

Joe Gammie
jgammie@nqo.com

FEARS are mounting over the impact on patients and financial waste of the estimated £9 million cost of bed blocking in Oxfordshire.

The concerns have been raised after it emerged this week that nearly half the number of beds in acute hospitals are being taken up by around four per cent of the trust's patients.

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust has 67 wards that provide 1,394 beds, with 151 of those set aside for children.

However, around 600 of the remaining beds are taken up each month with long-term patients who are in hospital for 14 days or more, meaning that just four per cent patients are using nearly half the capacity.

Clinical services director Paul Brennan told a meeting of the trust's board of directors that capacity was becoming the number one challenge.

He said: "The number of patients who were in our beds for 14 days or more have made up a



Clinical services director Paul Brennan stressed the problem

total of more than four per cent of our activity, but if we look at the bed days concerned that is 46 per cent.

"So four per cent of our patients are using nearly 50 per cent of our resources.

"That is clearly becoming our number one challenge."

In May, the trust had 13,024 patients of which 611 were long term, compared to 12,398 patients in April, with 626 of them staying in hospital 14 days or more.

The board heard that of the 152 delayed transfers of care in May, 119 were within the hospital, when patients had to stay there instead of being moved home, or into community hos-

pitals and nursing homes. This rose to 131 in June.

The trust, which runs Oxford's John Radcliffe and Churchill hospitals, Banbury's Horton General Hospital, as well as Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, launched a campaign on the problem in April.

It brought in more staff and patient transport services and offered earlier operation times.

However, Mr Brennan admitted that the 150 patients stuck in hospital beds on average each month was the equivalent of filling six of the trust's 67 wards.

With each ward costing around £1.5 million a year to run it is estimated that bed blocking could be costing up to £9 million a year.

Figures released in April revealed the trust was rated bottom in the country for bed blocking in January and second worst in March.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire chief executive Rachel Coney: "Healthwatch remain very concerned about the situation in Oxfordshire not only because of the financial waste but because of the impact being stuck in hospital has on patients' health and wellbeing."

The trust is working with the county council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust to improve transfers.

Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director James Miller feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 10 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although

that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and James is finding that his approach is a major factor

in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for,

which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give James a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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Oxfordshire Listings

Events

TODAY (WEDNESDAY)

Roman villa talk: Walk with social historian Cherry Hubbard around a Romano-British villa near North Leigh and hear stories of the luxuries of Roman life as they took their pleasure in the mosaic floored bath house or lounged in their fragrant courtyard garden, fine dining in sumptuous clothes. Dogs on leads are welcome. 2pm. £5. Book your place at www.wychwoodproject.org/cms/ node/21

A Tapestry of Artists: First exhibition of the Drovers' Arts Group, a new initiative celebrating and supporting arts and crafts in the Wantage area. It runs at Vale & Downland Museum, 19 Church Street, Wantage, until August 22. There will be a variety of work at the exhibition, which is supported by Green and Co, The Joint Economic Forum and Vale of White Horse District Council. Free entry. The Museum is closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays. 01235 771447.

Coffee morning: Meet the team at The Hummingbird Centre, Station Road, Launton, which supports people with cancer. Coffee or tea and homemade cake available. 10.30am-12.30pm. Free, but donations are welcome.

Steam day: Enjoy rides in vintage coaches behind Great Western steam locomotives, plus take photographs from vantage points, at Didcot Railway Centre, by Didcot Parkway. There are also displays of locomotives and carriages, plus a Science, learning and railways interactive centre, museum and restored air raid shelter. Adults £11, children £9. 01235 817200.

Ramblers' walk: Five-mile, figure-of-eight walk with pub stop at the end, starting at the car park of Rushy Common Nature Reserve, Cogges Lane, Stanton Harcourt, ref. SP381073. 10am. 01865 558709.

Star Power: This exhibition at Abingdon County Hall Museum, Market Place, focuses on 50 years of fusion research at Culham. Fusion – the process that powers the stars – could transform the way we produce electricity here on Earth. Free. 01235 523703.

TOMORROW

Puppet workshop: Youngsters aged five-seven are invited to dive deep under the sea with puppeteer Emma Boor at Chipping Norton Theatre, make an octopus, a shark or a sunken pirate ship, then stage a short performance for friends and family. 10am-1pm. £22. 01608 642350.

Desperately seeking something?: Discussion about what we are really looking for in life – and most importantly how to really get it. Held at The Global Retreat Centre, Nuneham Estate, Nuneham Courtenay. 7.30pm. Free event. 01865 343551.

Ramblers walk: Ten-and-a-half mile walk to Britwell Salome and Ewelme, starting at Swyncombe church at 10am. Bring a picnic. The walk is unsuitable for dogs. 01865 891147.

FRIDAY

Beer and music festival: The seventh annual event at the Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot, will run from Friday to Sunday. There will be more than 25 beers, ales and ciders, a barbecue and hog roast, plus top acts from the local and national music scene

playing on a pyramid stage in the Cornerstone meadow. This year's headline acts include Dubwiser and Flights of Helios. Music starts at 6pm on Friday, 2pm on Saturday and 3pm on Sunday. Free. 01235 515 144.

The Fuseli Circle: Talk at the Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street, Oxford, about the innovative draughtsmanship of Henry Fuseli (1741-1825), his followers and imitators. Martin Myrone focuses on Fuseli's dramatic style and discusses how he went on to inspire artists such as William Blake.1pm. £5/£4 concessions. 01865 278000.

Ramblers' walk: A five-mile circular walk through Blenheim Great Park with pub stop at the end, starting at Hensington Road car park, Woodstock, ref. SP447168, at 6.30pm. 07880 856912.

Cogges Beer and Cider Festival: Try more than 30 speciality beers and ciders from a range of local breweries at this fundraising event for Cogges Heritage Trust. There will also be food stalls, live music, Aunt Sally and other games at Cogges Manor Farm, Church Lane, Witney. Over 18s only. 6.30-11pm. £8 in advance / £10 on the door per night. Entry includes a programme and a free half-pint of beer or cider. Get tickets at the farm welcome desk or Rapture, Witney. 01993 772602.

SATURDAY

Arts and crafts fair: Opening reception from noon-2pm at the start of West Ox Arts group's August exhibition. Work for sale at West Ox Arts Gallery, Town Hall, Market Square, Bampton, will include jewellery, mosaics, ceramics, textiles and paintings. The exhibition runs until August 23. Free admission. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10.30am-4.30pm and Sunday 2-4pm.

Orwell Today: This event at The Old Vicarage, 11 High Street, Drayton, near Abingdon, held on Saturday and Sunday, will explore the relevance of George Orwell to our present-day lives in the company of five scholars who will each deal with a different application of his ideas to our society. There will also be a visit to the grave in Sutton Courtenay of the author of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm* – whose real name was Eric Blair – and a screening of a film of one of his books. See eventbrite.co.uk and search 'Orwell' for tickets and details of the programme. Free, though donations welcome. 01235 531107.

Summer festival: The event at Restore's gardens and cafe, Manzil Way, Cowley, will feature music from local bands, storytelling, crafts, massages, a barbecue and toasted marshmallows. There will also be a garden quiz. 5.30pm. Tickets £7 in advance from www.wegotickets.com/event/324008 or 0845 250 0518 /£9 on the door.

Steam day, Didcot: See Wednesday.

SUNDAY

Moths and grasshoppers: Drop into the Earth Trust Centre in Little Wittenham, near Abingdon, for a morning with moths and/or an afternoon with grasshoppers, and discover more about these interesting insects. Suggested donation of £4 per child, free for accompanying adults. 01865 407792.

Steam day, Didcot: See Wednesday.

MONDAY

Charity pub quiz: A new series of

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

monthly pub quizzes begins at The Oxfordshire Yeoman, 172 Wroslyn Road, Freeland, in aid of the African Children's Fund. The event will raise money for the Quentin Junior Academy in Tanzania. 8pm. £2.50 per person with teams of up to six people. 01993 705272.

Theatre weeks: Five-day workshops in drama (£125) and musical theatre (£140) for youngsters aged eight-12 at Chipping Norton Theatre. 01608 642350.

TUESDAY

Cool Continents: Native American-themed arts and crafts activities, including dreamcatchers, in a drop-in session from 1-4pm Harcourt Arboretum, Nuneham Courtenay. It is the first in a series of drop-in crafts events, held every Tuesday in August, each one themed around one of the world's continents. Activities are designed for children aged four-11 (who must be accompanied by an adult), but all ages are welcome. They coincide with the arboretum's new Cool Continents trail, which launches on Tuesday, where families can find out all about trees from around the world. Adults £4.50, concessions £3, children free. 01865 341576.

Sensory buggy walk: This event for babies and toddlers plus their parents at the Earth Trust, Little Wittenham, will encourage the use of the senses to learn about the natural world around us – stopping to smell, touch, taste, listen and look. 10am. Suggested donation of £4 suggested donation per child, accompanying adults free. No need to book. 01865 407792.

Drop-in and doodle: Be inspired by the 'Inside Out' exhibition at the Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot, which is all about Cornerstone as a space and a place. Imagine your favourite place and add it to a joint drawing or look at Cornerstone in a new way. 10am. Free. 01235 515144.

Yack and Yarn: Take along your unfinished knitting or crocheting project to this group, which meets at The Bell, Charlbury, on the first Tuesday of the month from 7.30-9.30pm. Everyone is welcome, regardless of ability. Yarn, crochet hooks and knitting needles can be provided. Free. 07867 880237 or charlburywi@outlook.com

Clay sculptures: Youngsters can go back to the Jurassic era and create their own dinosaur fossil in a workshop at the Cornerstone Arts Centre, Station Road, Didcot. 1.30pm. £15. 01235 515144.

Sewing workshop: Children will be shown how to use a sewing machine as well as hand stitching techniques and skills. They will make an apron to take home with them. The day-long workshop at The Blue Boar, 28 Market Square, Witney, includes lunch and soft drinks. Starts at 9.30am. £40. 01993 702772.

Ship Ahoy: Charlbury's annual holiday club, which has a nautical theme, will run from Tuesday to Friday at St Mary's Church. Suitable for four to 11-year-olds. 10am-12.30pm. £10 per child, £8 for further siblings. Contact Christine Pearce on 01608 810846 for information.

Music

FRIDAY

Country and western: Dancing to the trio Clear Cut at Carterton Social Centre, Brownes Lane, Carterton. 8.30pm. £6. 01993 850682.

Elvis tribute: Kev Cripps sings The King's hits at the Angel, Market Square, Witney. Free entry. 9pm. 01993 703238.

SATURDAY

Marsh Gibbon Silver Band: The concert at the village hall, Clements Lane, Marsh Gibbon, celebrates the band's 150th anniversary. It will feature live music from five brass bands and there will also be side stalls, face painting, pig roast, cream teas. 12pm. Free entry. 01869 350294.

SUNDAY

Folk in the Courtyard: Banbury Folk Club is hosting an afternoon of live music as a taster for Banbury Folk Festival in October. It will be held at the Banbury Cross pub, Butchers Row, Banbury, with barbecue. Starts at 12pm. Free. 01295 709881.

Jazz picnic: Take a picnic and listen to music on the lawn of Ditchley Park. The event will raise funds for Spelsbury Church. 12-4pm. Adults £10, children under 12 free from 01608 684234.

Open mic night: Held on the first Sunday of the month at the Beacon, Portway, Wantage. 6.30pm. Organisers are always looking for acts to sign up, so any would-be performers can email openmic@jtstageproductions.co.uk

MONDAY

Summer music workshops: These are open to children aged eight to 18 who play an instrument and will run for three days with a performance to family and friends at the end. Held at Wantage Silver Band Hall, Tugwell Field, Reading Road, Wantage. 9am-3pm. £75 for three days. For an application form, contact Tracy Warner on 07940 453878 or tbwarner@btinternet.com

Theatre

TODAY (WEDNESDAY)

Gorilla Gardening: Play aimed at encouraging children to engage with the outdoors and get digging through the imagining of Gorillas as horticulturalists. Suitable for under sevens and their families. The show at the Mill Arts Centre, Banbury, is 45 minutes long with a 15-minute 'stay and play' session. 11.30am. £8.50. 01295 279002.

Blithe Spirit: With crystal balls, jealous wives, séances, nutty clairvoyants, dim witted maidservants and some "terribly British" characters, this classic farce brings 1920s murder and mayhem to the Oxford University Parks, Parks Road, Oxford, as part of the English Repertory Theatre's Oxford Season. 12.30pm. £10 advance, £15/£19.50 on the door. 01865 305305.

Hamlet: English Repertory Theatre's adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy, performed at Oxford University Parks, Parks Road, Oxford, features Rachel Waring in the eponymous role. A letter from Hamlet's dead father explains Uncle Claudius bumped him off and, to rub salt into the wound, he has now married Hamlet's mother Gertrude. The murderous teenager sets out on a rampage of revenge. 2.30pm. £10 advance tickets £15/£19.50 door. 01865 305305.

Twelfth Night: In Oxford Shakespeare Company's production at Wadham College Gardens, Parks Road, Oxford, Nick Lloyd Webber revisits his acclaimed score under the direction of Nick Green for this adaptation of The Bard's timeless comedy. With gypsy folk band, mad hair, immense jewellery, outrageous costumes. 7.30pm. £13-£23. 01865 305305.

THURSDAY

As You Like It: Lawn setting for Shakespeare's romantic comedy, at Lady Margaret Hall, Norham Gardens, Oxford. The production by Creation features a wrestling match, love notes on trees and boys falling in love with girls dressed as boys. 7.30pm, plus Saturday matinées at 2.30pm. Tickets are £22 from creationtheatre.co.uk or 01865 766266. Runs until September 12.

Blithe Spirit: Oxford University Parks. See Wednesday.
Hamlet: Oxford University Parks. See Wednesday.
Twelfth Night: Wadham College Gardens. See Wednesday.

FRIDAY

Blithe Spirit: Oxford University Parks. See Wednesday.
Hamlet: Oxford University Parks. See Wednesday.
Twelfth Night: Wadham College Gardens. See Wednesday.

SATURDAY

Hamlet: Oxford University Parks. See Wednesday.
Twelfth Night: Wadham College Gardens. See Wednesday.

MONDAY

Blithe Spirit: Oxford University Parks. See Wednesday.
Hamlet: Oxford University Parks, Parks Road, Oxford. See Wednesday.
Twelfth Night: Wadham College Gardens. See Wednesday.

TUESDAY

Blithe Spirit: Oxford University Parks. See Wednesday.
Hamlet: Oxford University Parks. See Wednesday.
Twelfth Night: Wadham College Gardens. See Wednesday.

WEDNESDAY

Blithe Spirit: Oxford University Parks. See Thursday.
Hamlet: Oxford University Parks. See Thursday
Twelfth Night: Wadham College Gardens. See Thursday.

Comedy

SATURDAY

Glee Club, Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford: Four comics from the best of the UK and international circuit. 7.15pm. £14.50. 0871 472 0400.

Sun shines on best ever fundraising village fête

Some of the £3,500 raised will go towards restoring medieval church windows

David Rivers
drivers@nqo.com

THIS year's North Aston Village Fete has been hailed as one of the best ever.

At the village green in North Aston, more than 600 people turned out to sample various stalls and treats on offer.

A total of £3,500 was raised and part of the money will go towards the restoration of the medieval windows in the parish church of St Mary's.

On show were a range of horses that visitors had the opportunity to ride and homemade sweets which were hailed as "lovely".

Chairman of the North Aston Parish meeting Kildare Borrowes, who has been involved with the fete, said: "It was a very good event and must be the best fete ever."

"A visitor said to me this is the best fete ever. I think it topped last year's event."

"We run a very old fashioned fete and in a very beautiful rural site and what topped last year's was the weather, which was a perfect,



Welly wanging played a part in the day of festival activities for all ages

sunny summer's day.

"There was a very encouraging turnout and we had excellent weather."

Fairground rides, brass bands, stalls and traditional summer games were on offer to visitors.

Food lovers could enjoy a feast of home-cooked delicacies on the village green.

But there was also a more global element to this year's event, provided by visiting Japanese students from the Select School of English, who dressed in kimonos and gave demonstrations of their nation's traditional crafts.

Organiser Marcus Potts said: "The attendance was significantly up on last year and the takings also improved dramatically."



A mix of the traditional and Japanese students with kimonos and karate



Traditional English attractions at this year's fete included bunting, cream teas, a range of games including family-friendly jousting and a carousel

Marathon duo to stage fundraiser for charity run

TWO friends are hoping to raise enough money to run the 2016 London Marathon by holding a fundraiser at Broughton Castle Great Hall.

Simon Overy and Hannah Reynolds are aiming to run in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support after Mr Overy was diagnosed with an aggressive form of skin cancer a few years ago.

Mr Overy has now fully recovered and would like to give something back to the MacMillan nurses who helped him.

Ms Reynolds said: "My motivation to run the marathon with Simon is to celebrate his bravery and his recovery."

"Also, his determination to train for and run the London Marathon in 2016, which he has sneakily roped me in as his running partner."

Mr Overy, who grew up in Middleton Cheney and attended Bloxham School from 1994-2001, needs to raise £2,500 in order to secure his place in the race, as does Ms Reynolds.

Ms Reynolds said: "Simon is far too modest to acknowledge his own valour, and the inspiration he is to those around him."

"I am honoured that he has asked me to assist in his training for the second biggest challenge of his life so far, it will be a challenge to cross the finish line with him."

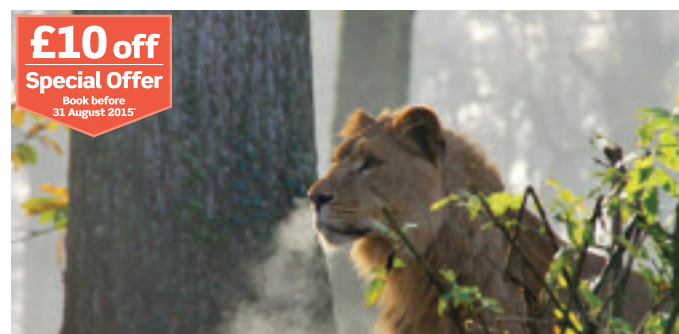
The night at Broughton will consist of a drinks reception to medieval madrigal male voice singing, guided tours of the magnificent 14th-century castle and an opportunity to dine on a three-course dinner in the Castle's Great Hall.

To find out more information or buy tickets for this event, visit simons-fundraising.com/

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Tom cruises through array of stunts in action movie

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE – ROGUE NATION (12A, 131 mins), an action/thriller with Tom Cruise, Jeremy Renner, Simon Pegg, Rebecca Ferguson, Ving Rhames, Sean Harris, Alec Baldwin, Simon McBurney, Jens Hulten and Tom Hollander. Director: Christopher McQuarrie.

CALL it testosterone-fuelled recklessness, hubris or feeling the need ... the need for speed, Tom Cruise certainly puts on a show in the fifth instalment of the franchise.

He clings to the side of a plane as it takes flight, slaloms at dizzying speed on a motorcycle and performs death-defying leaps as secret agent Ethan Hunt.

The 53-year-old star performs most of these hair-raising stunts himself, allowing writer-director Christopher McQuarrie to capture every pulse-quickening second in thrilling close-up with minimum digital trickery.

Cruise's commitment to his role puts fellow action stars to shame. Unlike the films of Stallone and Schwarzenegger, the script is devoid of wry one-liners to poke fun at his advancing years.

McQuarrie, Oscar-winning screenwriter of *The Usual Suspects*, bookmarks slam-bang action sequences with intentionally ambiguous exchanges between rival operatives, who acknowledge the futility of their efforts as pawns in the spy game.

Their inevitable deaths will go unnoticed and fresh-faced young agents will step forward, continuing the brutal tug-of-war between political idealism and

global terrorism. The film opens with the Impossible Missions Force (IMF) hijacking a shipment of nerve gas from Chechen separatists.

Soon after, CIA director Alan Hunley (Alec Baldwin) succeeds in shutting down IMF for a total disregard for protocol, which led to the destruction of the Kremlin in the previous film.

The hunters become the hunted when a shadowy organisation known as the Syndicate, fronted by Solomon Lane (Sean Harris), targets IMF for extinction.

Hunt covertly reunites with colleagues William Brandt (Jeremy Renner), Benji Dunn (Simon Pegg) and computer hacker Luther Stickell (Ving Rhames) to bring down The Syndicate using every gadget, disguise and turbo-charged vehicle at their disposal.

The operation brings Hunt into close contact with undercover MI6 agent Ilsa Faust (Rebecca Ferguson) and her slippery handler (Simon McBurney), a sadistic henchman known as the Bone Doctor (Jens Hulten) and the unsuspecting British Prime Minister (Tom Hollander).

"This may very well be our last mission," Brandt tells Hunt. "Make it count."

Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation is slickly bolted together by McQuarrie and editor Eddie Hamilton (*Kick-Ass*, *Kingsman: The Secret Service*).

Turbo-charged scenes of carnage are punctuated by IMF's existential crisis in a world that regards their methods as "outdated".

Cruise somersaults, punches and tumbles through every frame without breaking sweat,



Tom Cruise steps back into the shoes of Ethan Hunt and gathers his cohorts for another seemingly impossible mission

while Pegg, who was pigeon-holed as comic relief in the previous instalment, steps up in a pivotal supporting role.

Ferguson's ice maiden doesn't thaw sufficiently under Cruise's smouldering gaze to kindle on-screen chemistry but her femme fatale snaps several limbs and necks in impressive hand-to-hand combat sequences.

Humour is used sparingly to diffuse tension, leaving us hungry for another explosion of IMF antics to the pulsating rhythm of Lalo Schiffrin's iconic theme.

On this evidence, *Mission:*

Impossible and its gung-ho leading man won't be self-destructing any time soon.

Cake Bookworm

Taking pity by David Mark, hard-back by Quercus, £18.99 (ebook £9.49)

In this fourth novel of the series, former journalist David Mark continues to follow the tortured souls that are DS Aector McAvoy and DS Trish Pharoah. Grieving for the loss of his family, home and job, McAvoy is missing his wife, who has been hidden away for her safety. Pharoah tasks him with an investigation for the Home Office looking into a 50-year-old case. Unlike many murder mysteries of late, Mark takes you on an emotional journey as the words leap off the page to create a vivid picture worthy of a TV drama. Perfect for lovers of Scandi-thrillers, with noir elements which only a cultural melting pot like Hull can offer.

The Girls by Lisa Jewell, Century, priced £12.99 (ebook £6.02). You can't pick your neighbours, so can you trust them? Community,

teenage secrets and hidden pasts are explored in this engaging novel from Lisa Jewell, the bestselling author of *The House We Grew Up In*. Within the communal gardens of Virginia Crescent, life seems eternally peaceful until the comatose body of a new 13-year-old resident is discovered in the darkness following a neighbourhood party. Suddenly everyone seems to be a suspect, and the residents question who they can really trust. Jewell has crafted a community filled with complex personalities, and as the dark histories of the garden and its residents come to light, you come to trust everyone and no one all at once, leaving you as unsettled as the characters. However, it is in the narration of young adults where Jewell excels, as their attention to detail, which is so often overlooked by adults, assists to unravel a tight web of secrets. Captivating, entertaining and rich with emotion, this is a perfect holiday read.

The Looking Glass House by Vanessa Tait, Corvus, £14.99 (ebook £3.99)

Vanessa Tait, the great granddaughter of Alice Liddell, brings to light the imaginings of Lewis Carroll's famous tale. Condensed into one year, Tait explores the struggle between childhood and womanhood in the face of romance and adventure. Alice, the outspoken 10-year-old, is in competition with Mary Prickett, her jealous governess, for the love of Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll). Tait captures Victorian society and childhood literature, raising questions of religion, Darwin, morality and etiquette. Alice's stubbornness towards chastisement, reproach and manners clearly marks the path for adventure in a topsy-turvy world where adult rules are made to be broken. Overall, it's a stimulating observation of the beginnings of Alice's adventure and the underworld of Oxford's elite.

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Australian Tim Paine made an unbeaten 101 in Banbury's win

Paine's ton keeps Banbury on track

Australian's century boosts title challenge

TIM Paine hit his fourth century of the season to steer Banbury to an emphatic nine-wicket home win over Harefield in Serious Cricket Home Counties Premier League Division 1.

Chasing Harefield's 174-9 after the visitors had been put in to bat on Saturday, the Australian hammered an unbeaten 101 as title-chasing Banbury cruised to 178-1 in 29.5 overs.

Ed Phillips was out first ball to Doug King.

But then Paine, assisted by Lloyd Sabin, fired Ban-

CRICKET

bury to victory with his runs coming off 89 balls, and including ten fours and five sixes.

Sabin was unbeaten on 69 from 89 deliveries, with six fours and two sixes.

Earlier, skipper Luke Ryan had taken 4-40 to hold Harefield in check.

Banbury's hopes of reaching the South East Area semi-finals of the Nat West Club T20 competition were ended 6-5 in a dramatic bowl-out against Gerrards Cross on Sunday.

Heavy rain led to the Home Counties Premier League T20 finals day at Banbury being relocated to Blessed George Napier School's sports hall.

Banbury and Gerrards Cross advanced from the semi-finals with victories against Reading and Slough respectively.

The final went to sudden death after Ryan levelled for 3-3.

Strikes by Ryan and Ollie Wright were matched by Gerrards Cross, but Sabin missed the stumps and the Bucks side hit to seal victory.

LATEST TABLE

SERIOUS CRICKET HOME COUNTIES PREMIER LEAGUE

DIVISION 1

	P	W	D	L	A	B	Pts
Henley	12	9	1	2	0	23	226
Banbury	12	9	1	1	1	11	225
H Wycombe	12	8	2	1	1	29	221
*Reading	12	5	3	4	0	47	165
Slough	12	4	2	5	1	42	139
Burnham	12	3	3	6	0	58	137
Horspath	12	3	2	6	1	45	122
Tring Park	12	3	1	7	1	47	121
Harefield	12	3	1	7	1	41	120
Oxford	12	0	2	8	2	55	73

* 1pt deducted

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STARS with Claire Petulengro

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ARIES

Mar 21-Apr 19

Someone you thought you could trust lets out a secret you have been trying to keep under wraps for weeks. The good news is that they're actually doing you a favour Aries, as you discover how much support your close ones are willing to give you. From Tuesday you're on a quest and self belief is half the battle. Ring now so I can tell you why I'm so excited about the rest of this year.

0906 585 4360

TAURUS

Apr 20-May 20

You have got to stop worrying about things which aren't under your control or you're going to make yourself ill. Time spent with those who know you well helps you put life and love into perspective. Gemini's teach you how to let your hair down. You're about to find out that even those above you in business have a price when it comes to selling out. Ring to hear why you should prepare to be surprised.

0906 585 4361

GEMINI

May 21-Jun 20

You've had a lot to get through in your personal life lately and I have to say you've done an admirable job. Phone calls you've been avoiding could actually change the way you view a close one, so give them a call. The planets are on course for you to be pleasantly surprised. Give me a ring now to hear why it's worth wearing your heart on your sleeve in relationships.

0906 585 4362

CANCER

Jun 21-Jul 22

Make a stand sooner rather than later and tell close ones you're not going to get involved in their petty arguments. If you don't, you could end up becoming entangled in unnecessary disputes. Your time is too precious, especially this weekend, to waste it on those who won't give anything back. Ring now to hear how house moves and changes could soon be written in your stars.

0906 585 4363

LEO

Jul 23-Aug 22

I know you thought a certain issue had been laid to rest but, in actual fact Leo, it won't be until you've admitted what and who you really want that you'll get to find out what those around you can really offer. Saturn helps you to get back in control of finances, if you can be straight up about what you do and do not have. Ring now to hear what new paths await you in work this August.

0906 585 4364

VIRGO

Aug 23-Sep 22

You must cut yourself some slack and stop judging yourself on the bad things that have happened. If you were to sit down and look at all the good things you've done then you'd see they far outweigh the setbacks, just don't allow yourself to freeze for fear of being left behind. Ring now to hear why I think you should accept those late night last minute invites.

0906 585 4365

LIBRA

Sep 23-Oct 22

You won't be able to help but attract new admirers this week as Venus casts you in an irresistible light to all around. If there is someone you've been finding it impossible to get an apology from, now is the time to try again. Older family members could do with more help and support from Wednesday. Ring now to hear why it's not worth staying mad at an ex this month.

0906 585 4366

SCORPIO

Oct 23-Nov 21

You're going to find it far easier this week to tolerate difficult faces than you did last month and this is due to the planet Mars giving you the intelligence to know how to get in control of life and love again. A broken promise was not meant to be, so try not to go off at the deep end with a close one. Ring now to hear why I want you to work harder this week.

0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22-Dec 21

If someone had told you five years ago that your life would be where it is now, then you would not have believed them. You've come a long way my friend, can't you see? Utilise the many hidden skills you have and talk to those with the power about your dreams and ambitions. This is the week you can turn that all important corner in work. Ring me to hear why you're more psychic now.

0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN

Dec 22-Jan 19

Private plans and dreams you've been hoping for are given a helping hand by the stars as you start to see with ease what needs to be done to get ahead of the competition. Pisces bring out your flirtatious nature as you push the limits, but know what you want from them before you take things too far please. Ring now to hear which sign I think is a match made in heaven for you this year.

0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS

Jan 20-Feb 18

Those around you will be giving you the impression that they know more than they do about your situation, so be careful of giving away more than you have to. You would be far better to say less rather than more, for reasons you'll see by Friday. Don't let an ex bully you into doing something you don't want to. You've moved on and so should they. Ring now so I can give you back your confidence.

0906 585 4370

PISCES

Feb 19-Mar 20

Money matters are not as bad as some of you may think and the sooner you sit down and do your sums, the sooner you will see this fact for yourself Pisces. Don't be afraid to let new people into your life, it's time you breathed some fresh air into a stale situation. No one should tell you that you're not allowed friends. Ring now to hear how you're finally coming into your own.

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10 MOTORS

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In brief

■ The first production models of Honda's Civic Type-R have rolled off its Swindon production line. Finished in red, white and blue, the first three cars began their journey to dealerships across Europe and were joined by staff, management and Honda Yuasa BTCC driver Matt Neal. These Civics follow millions built at the UK plant over the last 20 years. The facility will be the only one in the world producing the 167mph hot hatch. Soichiro Takizawa, managing director at Honda of the UK Manufacturing (HUM), said: "We are extremely proud to be the only manufacturer of the Civic Type-R in the world."

■ More than a quarter of people wouldn't feel confident explaining any of the jargon on a car finance agreement, despite 77 per cent of new car purchases using dealer-sourced finance. Terms like "personal contract hire", "deposit contribution" and "gap insurance" are leaving drivers in a spin, potentially not knowing what they are actually signing up for. BMW Financial Services quizzed more than 1,000 people about the jargon commonly found on car purchasing agreements.

This Scout does a very good turn

Auto facts

Model: Skoda Octavia Scout 2.0 TDI 4x4 DSG
Price: £27,990
Insurance group: 22E
Fuel consumption (Combined): 55.4mpg
Top speed: 136mph
Length: 468.5cm/184.5in
Width: 181.4cm/71.4in
Luggage capacity: 20.8 cu ft
Fuel tank capacity: 11 gallons/50 litres
CO2 emissions: 134g/km
Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles

By David Duffy
david.duffy@nqo.com

MANY Skoda Octavia owners are clearly not satisfied with driving a spacious, quiet and eminently competent estate car. They want something extra.

And the Czech car maker has been happy to supply that special something in the shape of the Scout model.

Combining rugged styling, off-road ability and first-class road refinement, Skoda says almost one in ten Octavia estates sold in recent years bears the Scout badge.

Having driven the new model – the most powerful Scout ever built – the appeal is clear. Apart from anything else, it combines a significant increase in size and improvements in specification with significant cost savings, thanks to cleaner and more fuel-efficient engines.

At its heart, the new Octavia Scout is a real workhorse – designed to appeal to caravanners and other people who tow big loads. It can now pull up to 2,000kg, and thanks to a 33mm increase in ride height, is even more capable off-road, able to master steeper, more demanding terrain with ease.



The Scout is specially designed to pull caravans and tow big loads

The new Octavia Scout is equipped with the most advanced four-wheel-drive system ever offered by Skoda. It responds rapidly thanks to a control unit that continuously calculates the ideal driving torque for the rear axle. When coasting, or driving with a light load, the front axle becomes the sole driving axle.

When the going gets really tough, an electronic differential lock operates on both axles, so if a wheel starts spinning on a slippery surface, driving torque is transmitted to the opposite wheel. Braking is then applied

specifically to the spinning wheel until traction is restored.

The new Scout range is headed by a 2.0-litre 184 horsepower engine that drives through a six-speed automatic transmission. A 150 horsepower version fitted with a six-speed manual gearbox is also available.

The Scout feels a solid, well-built long-distance cruiser with clear instrumentation and a high level of technology. Models are available with up to nine airbags, an automatic braking system, driver fatigue sensor, automatic lighting and an electronic parking assistant.

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Simply Land Rover

Chance to try out an off-road course

LAND Rovers of all ages and varieties will be heading to Beaulieu on Sunday, August 9, for Simply Land Rover.

Now in its third year the event, taking place in the grounds of the National Motor Museum, puts on an impressive display that is sure to appeal to fans of Britain's best-loved off-roader. From the classic Series I, II and III, to the rugged County and Defender, iconic Range Rover and capable Discovery, all Land Rover models and derivatives are welcome to take part.

Land Rover owners can drive into the Beaulieu parkland to join the display, meet like-minded enthusiasts, admire the array of

vehicles and enjoy all of the features of one of the south's leading visitor attractions for £10 per adult and £5 per child.

During the day, why not try out Beaulieu's own Forest Drive? Beaulieu has partnered with Land Rover Experience West Country to give participants the chance to try out this 45-minute off-road course. Simply book a slot to take part in your own Land Rover, or book a driver or passenger slot in a Land Rover Experience vehicle. For further details, including terms and conditions, please visit www.beaulieuevents.co.uk

Tickets for participants, who will be displaying their Land Rover in

the event, cost £10 for an adult and £5 for a child and can be purchased upon arrival at Beaulieu, or in advance online at www.beaulieushop.co.uk or by telephone at 01590 612888.

Participant tickets include entry to all of the features of the Beaulieu attraction, including the National Motor Museum, Palace House, Beaulieu Abbey and World of Top Gear. These tickets do not include the Forest Drive, which is a separately charged activity.

Entry into the grounds with a Land Rover is from 9.30am. Other visitors can buy tickets at the normal attraction prices, either online or on arrival, from 10am.

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